

REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING  
OF THE FALLS CHURCH PLANNING COMMISSION

3 April 2006  
Council Chamber

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Rodgers called the meeting to order at 7:50 PM.
2. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:	Ms. Budetti (arrived 7:53 PM)
	Mr. Burnett
	Ms. Fauber
	Mr. Holran (arrived 8:07 PM)
	Mr. Puentes
	Ms. Rodgers

Member Absent:	Ms. Sanders
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Administrative Staff Present:	Ms. Friel, General Manager of Development Services/ Planning Director
	Mr. Fuller, Principal Planner

3. PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS:

Mr. Burnett reported that a Falls Church Film Festival would be held on 18 April at the State Theatre. The Festival will feature the work of six local filmmakers, including one of his productions. Mr. Burnett's film is part of the American Architectural Foundation's Great Schools By Design series and concerns a school in St. Paul, Minnesota. Dave Eckert's newest film, which had a standing room only premier at the Kennedy Center's Environmental Film Festival, will also be shown. The doors will open at 6:30 PM and the films will be shown beginning at 7:00 PM. There is a modest admission fee.

Chair Rodgers reported that the Preservation Partners Task Force had held two meetings, had established subcommittees, and had begun researching historic preservation information. The Task Force is to make its recommendation to the City Council on the City's historic preservation ordinance by 30 June. She advised that the Task Force had a number of complex issues to study, but was up to the task, given the well-qualified individuals appointed.

4. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS: None.

5. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT/WORKSESSION SCHEDULE:

Ms. Friel reported that the usual written monthly report had been provided in the Commission's package. She provided information on items scheduled for the Commission's review this

evening, as well as for upcoming meetings. On 17 April the City Council and Planning Commission will hold joint worksessions on the Commission's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) recommendation and on substandard lots. The Commission's regular meeting will have a delayed start time of approximately 8:30 PM, at which time the Commission will consider a recommendation to staff on the use of the parcel approved for the West End View project and a recommendation to Council on the Zoning Ordinance amendment concerning pipestem lots. A worksession on 1 May is scheduled for Zoning Ordinance amendments related to form based coding.

Ms. Friel stated that the Preservation Partners Task Force had held two meetings and that a guest speaker would attend its 11 April meeting. The citywide parking plan presented in several recent public meetings should be implemented in August.

Ms. Friel advised that the Special Exception application for the Northgate project at 472 North Washington Street would be resubmitted soon. The rezoning application for 110 Great Falls Street was being revised to address neighborhood concerns and should be resubmitted soon.

In response to Commissioners's inquiries, Ms. Friel affirmed that staff was continuing to monitor a number of noncompliant development sites. Some of the nine sites originally identified as noncompliant had been brought into compliance and other sites had been added to the list. Staff would resolve issues on the sites being monitored; site plan amendments were not required. She agreed to provide a bullet list of information on noncompliant sites to the Commission. Ms. Friel explained the format of the recent Residential Development Workshop. Five stations – engineering, zoning, arborist, Chesapeake Bay, and building – were provided to discuss the various review functions associated with residential development through a grading plan submission. All participants were divided into five groups and circulated to each station during the evening. She advised that it was a good format and the attendees learned a great deal about the process and had their questions answered. Approximately 40 citizens and Councilmembers attended. A summary of the workshop was in the eFocus.

6. OLD BUSINESS: None.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

#### **SITE PLAN SP05-0191, 402 WEST BROAD STREET, THE READ BUILDING**

Robert Young, representing Jefferson 402 LLC, was present.

Mr. Fuller reported that this site plan relates to a special exception application approved by the City Council on 27 February 2006 for the subject site. The Planning Commission held a worksession on this site plan on 20 March.

The site plan is for a mixed-use redevelopment at 402 West Broad Street. The site is approximately .68 acres; zoned B-1, Limited Business; and designated for Mixed Use (MUR) on the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map. The project's special exception was for a mixed use with conditions, conceptual plans, and community benefits, which were tied to the

City Council's approval. Mr. Young, managing member of the property operating as Jefferson 402 LLC, pre-filed a site plan in December 2005, in conjunction with the pending special exception application.

The planned mixed-use project is known as The Read Building and includes a four-story, fifty-five foot high building with commercial uses on the first and second floors and twenty-six residential units on the third and fourth floors. The commercial uses include a 2,350 square foot bank with a drive-through use and a 9,450 square foot health club. The residential units include nine Teacher Workforce Units (TWUs). The project provides 49 parking spaces on site and 23 parking spaces off-site through a parking agreement and deed of easement. The commercial uses are proposed to share parking and additional commercial parking off-site would be shared with an adjacent, co-owned, property at 105 North Virginia Avenue, in the evenings.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends "Mixed-Use" for the subject site. The planned mixed-use development is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, as evaluated during the special exception process and approval.

The City's Design Guidelines elements for Community Character, Streetscapes, Site Elements Commercial/Office Buildings and New Residential Buildings are addressed by the planned mixed-use project. The project would include approximately one-third commercial and two-thirds residential uses. The existing site previously had an automobile service business. The redevelopment project will enhance the site with a new building, architectural design, and streetscape improvement features.

The Planning Commission must consider several site plan issues as part of the site plan approval. Staff determined that four landscape waivers and a commercial entrance waiver are needed.

1. Landscape Waivers. The Planning Commission had indicated its general support for the waivers with its special exception application recommendation to the City Council. The Planning Commission has authority to grant landscape waivers with site plan approval. The following landscape waivers are requested.

- A. To Section 38-30(c)(1), Perimeter Parking Lot Landscaping Adjacent to Public Streets, of the City Code to reduce a required ten-foot wide planting strip to four feet wide, with a three and one-half foot high masonry wall provided as a screening element.
- B. To Section 38-30(c)(2), Perimeter Parking Lot Landscaping Adjacent to Abutting Properties, of the City Code for a sixty-eight foot long side yard perimeter landscape buffer area on the site's southeast side and a ninety-foot long side yard perimeter landscape buffer area on the site's northwest side to reduce the width of the required ten-foot wide planting strip to seven and one-half feet wide due to a one-foot wide garden retaining wall and a one and an adjacent one-half foot wide grass pave surface for vehicle overhang. Further, the planting area is a bioretention area and may not provide a solid landscape planting strip of at least three and one-half feet in height.
- C. To Section 38-30(c)(2), Perimeter Parking Lot Landscaping Adjacent to Abutting Properties, of the City Code to reduce the width of a required ten-foot wide planting strip to four feet wide, in the form of a planting island in the right rear corner of the site.

D. To Section 38-30(d), Commercial, Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Development – Interior Parking Lot Landscaping, of the City Code to reduce the minimum of five percent interior landscaping for parking lot areas to two and two-tenths percent.

2. Entrances Off-Street Parking Waiver. Allow a vehicular entrance or exit to commercial off-street parking within 100 feet of an R District, as there is no other feasible location, considering public safety and adequate vehicular circulation. This waiver is required as the Winter Hill Condominium development, immediately across West Broad Street, is zoned R-M.

3. Shared Parking Waiver. Consideration of waiving Section 38-31(c)(1)b., Collective Use of Off-Street Parking and Loading Facilities, of the City Code to permit shared parking through an off-site agreement for 23 parking spaces at peak periods. The shared parking agreement permits use of 105 North Virginia Avenue.

4. Easements/Agreements. An ingress/egress easement is labeled on the plans and plats for vehicular traffic circulation between 402 West Broad Street and 105 North Virginia Avenue. An off-site shared parking agreement is provided to document use of parking spaces at 105 North Virginia Avenue. The agreement shall run with the land; tenants/users of 105 North Virginia Avenue shall not park on the premises after 5 PM.

Mr. Fuller reported that the easement was from 402 West Broad Street to 105 North Virginia Avenue only; a reciprocal agreement was not needed. Staff supports generally the landscape waivers and shared parking, based on the approved special exception conceptual plan.

The staff provided detailed comments on the applicant's second site plan submission in a letter dated 22 March 2006. The applicant addressed staff comments in a letter dated 29 March 2006 and submitted a revised site plan. The third site plan submission was distributed to staff for review. Staff comments on the second submission were not significant and appear to have been addressed in the third submission. Copies of the staff comments and the applicant's response were provided in the staff report. Following tonight's Commission site plan approval, staff will conduct an administrative review to confirm that all comments have been addressed and that a final site plan submission reflects all approvals prior to bonding and release of the site plan for permitting purposes.

The City Council adopted Resolution 2006-08 on 27 February 2006, shown on site plan Sheet 3A of 12, which represents the special exception approval and related conditions for the mixed-use development at 402 West Broad Street. The Development Agreement for Teacher Workforce Units; the Voluntary Concessions, Terms and Conditions for The Read Building 402 West Broad Street, the Board of Zoning Appeals's 16 February 2006 Minutes approving the associated Special Use Permit U1475-06 for the bank drive-through; and the Deed of Easement are provided on various site plan sheets. These documents were reviewed for accuracy. Final required signatures from the applicant, as well as the deed book and page recording information are required as part of the final administrative site plan approval.

Staff compared the special exception conditions of approval to the subject site plan and found the plans in substantial conformance. One change noted was a change in location and a reduction in

bicycle storage facilities. The applicant will provide bicycle storage facilities within the project and within the streetscape.

Staff recommends that Site Plan SP05-0191 be approved contingent upon administrative staff review and approval of pending site plan items. Final Planning Commission approval should include, by motion, specific approval of the landscape waivers requested, the commercial vehicular entrance waiver, the shared parking waiver, and staff approval of any pending comments from the staff review of the 29 March 2006 site plan resubmission.

Mr. Young noted that the Planning Commission had seen the development plan a number of times, the staff had provided a good summary, and that he was prepared to respond to any questions from Commissioners.

Mr. Burnett inquired when the landscape buffer requirement was codified. He expressed his belief that the same comments and questions would be raised repeatedly with future mixed-use developments without some clarification now. Mr. Burnett expressed his belief that the Tree Commission's comments on this site plan were very strong given the green roof that would be provided with the project. He advised that he did not support creating landscape moats around buildings.

Mr. Holran reiterated his concerns that two easement agreements were needed for this development: one from 402 West Broad Street to 105 North Virginia Avenue; and one from 105 North Virginia Avenue to 402 West Broad Street. The Commission has received only one easement to date.

In response to Commissioners's questions, Mr. Fuller used the site plan to indicate where bicycle racks would be located; agreed to discuss with the City Attorney whether one of the voluntary concessions approved by Council could be changed to make the noun and the pronoun agree; clarified that the 10-foot landscape buffer requirement had not changed when the provisions of the Tree Ordinance were incorporated in the Landscape Ordinance, it had been codified long ago; that it is typical for parking and landscaping requirements to be in conflict on small sites; and the required landscape buffer would be relaxed to eight and one-half feet for this development.

Mr. Young indicated that no enclosed bicycle storage would be provided; that the existing impervious surface on the site is 91%, which would be reduced greatly with the new development; that he had been advised that reciprocal easements were not permitted; that the area from which egress was permitted from 402 West Broad Street to 105 North Virginia Avenue was limited to the area shaded and noted on the site plan; and that an easement from 105 North Virginia Avenue to 402 West Broad Street was not required as that site had sufficient easement to North Virginia Avenue. He described the vehicular traffic flow on both sites and affirmed that the drive isle on the 105 North Virginia Avenue property would remain one-way.

Mr. Holran expressed his belief that the mutual easement issue needed to be resolved. It would be appropriate for the Commission to move forward with its approval of the site plan provided

that the approval was conditioned on having two easements. Mr. Young concurred. Mr. Fuller noted that that issue was identified in the staff comments in the 22 March letter to the applicant.

In response to questions from Commissioners regarding the green roof, Mr. Fuller advised that the City's engineering staff and the Chesapeake Bay Interdisciplinary Review Team (CBIRT) had evaluated the green roof, and the City Arborist had evaluated the bioretention component of the development. Mr. Young provided a summary of the composition of the green roof proposed. He advised that the area labeled as "condenser farm" on the green roof would contain several condensers. Condensers work in a manner similar to the way that heat pumps work. There will be one condenser for each residential unit and several units for the commercial spaces. There would be little drainage from either the condenser farm or from the green roof. A maintenance agreement for the green roof would be required in condominium documents.

Mr. Burnett advised that a building need not required have a flat roof in order to provide a green roof. He described a sloped green roof on a Seattle, Washington public library. The library has an interior periscope so that patrons can view the green roof.

In response to Chair Rodgers's questions about the review and approval process, Mr. Fuller advised that the Architectural Advisory Board (AAB) had seen the development's conceptual plan at its 4 January meeting. The AAB is scheduled to review and comment on the site plan at its 5 April meeting. The detailed site plan is virtually the same as the conceptual plan, however if the AAB recommends changes, those changes would be incorporated into the administrative review and approval.

In response to Mr. Holran's questions, Mr. Fuller advised that another landscape waiver was not needed for the areas designated as ingress/egress points to 105 North Virginia Avenue. Mr. Holran expressed his preference that the orphaned existing parking spaces on the 105 North Virginia Avenue property be made green areas. Mr. Young advised that they could not be called a green area, but that Mr. Holran could depend upon that change.

The Chair opened the item to the public. Hearing no response and having received no written comments, the Chair closed the item to the public.

MOTION: Ms. Budetti moved, and Mr. Holran seconded, that the Planning Commission approved Site Plan SP05-1091 with the following conditions:

1. Approved a waiver to Section 38-30(c)(1), Perimeter Parking Lot Landscaping Adjacent to Public Streets, of the City Code to reduce the required ten foot wide planting strip to four feet wide, with a three and one-half foot high masonry wall to provide a screening element.
2. Approved a waiver to Section 38-30(c)(2), Perimeter Parking lot Landscaping Adjacent to Abutting Properties, of the City Code for a sixty-eight-foot long side yard perimeter landscape buffer area on the site's southeast side and a ninety-foot long side yard perimeter landscape buffer area on the site's northwest side to reduce the width of the required ten-foot planting strip to seven and one-half-feet wide due to a one-foot wide garden retaining wall and an adjacent one and one-

half-foot wide grass pave surface for vehicle overhang. Further, the planting area is a bioretention area and may not provide a solid landscape planting strip of at least three and one-half feet in height.

3. Approved a waiver to Section 38-30(c)(2), Perimeter Parking Lot Landscaping Adjacent to Abutting Properties, of the City Code to reduce the width of the required ten-foot wide planting strip to four-feet wide, in the form of a planting island in the rear right corner of the site.
4. Approved a waiver to Section 38-30(d), Commercial, Multi-Family and Mixed Use Development – Interior Parking Lot Landscaping, of the City Code to reduce the minimum of five percent interior landscaping for parking lot areas to two and two-tenths percent.
5. Approved a waiver to Section 38-31(b)(9), Entrances Off-Street Parking, of the City Code to allow a vehicular entrance or exit to commercial off-street parking within 100 feet of an R-District as the Planning Commission found that there is no other feasible location, considering public safety and adequate vehicular circulation. This waiver was required as the Winter Hill Condominium development, immediately across West Broad Street, is zoned R-M.
6. Approved a waiver to Section 38-31(c)(1)b., Collective use of Off-Street Parking and Loading Facilities, of the City Code to permit shared parking through an off-site agreement for 23 parking spaces at peak periods. The shared parking agreement permits use of 105 North Virginia Avenue.
7. Approved an ingress/egress easement, as labeled on plans and plats, to provide for vehicular traffic circulation between 402 West Broad Street and 105 North Virginia Avenue. An off-site shared parking agreement documents parking use of spaces at 105 North Virginia Avenue, which shall run with the land.
8. Approved final staff approval of remaining contingencies.
9. Approved any recommendations from the Architectural Advisory Board's review of the site plan at its 5 April 2006 meeting.

Mr. Holran agreed to second the motion provided that the developer be required to provide an ingress/egress easement between 105 North Virginia Avenue and 402 West Broad Street. **Ms. Budetti accepted the amendment.**

**RESTATED MOTION:**

Ms. Budetti moved, and Mr. Holran seconded, that the Planning Commission approved Site Plan SP05-1091 with the following conditions:

1. Approved a waiver to Section 38-30(c)(1), Perimeter Parking Lot Landscaping Adjacent to Public Streets, of the City Code to reduce the required ten foot wide planting strip to four feet wide, with a three and one-half foot high masonry wall to provide a screening element.
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7. Approved an ingress/egress easement, as labeled on plans and plats, to provide for vehicular traffic circulation between 402 West Broad Street and 105 North Virginia Avenue. An off-site shared parking agreement documents parking use of spaces at 105 North Virginia Avenue, which shall run with the land.
8. Approved final staff approval of remaining contingencies.
9. Approved any recommendations from the Architectural Advisory Board's review of the site plan at its 5 April 2006 meeting.
10. Required the applicant to provide an ingress/egress easement between 105 North Virginia Avenue and 402 West Broad Street.

The motion passed 5-0-1 (Ms. Fauber abstained).

Mr. Young thanked the Planning Commission for its thorough review, which had been time consuming. He advised that the project would make the City proud. He inquired when the Planning Commission would consider Zoning Ordinance amendments to commercial parking regulations. Ms. Friel advised that that issue remained unscheduled. The City Council had expressed an interest in holding another worksession on the issue.

#### 8. OTHER BUSINESS:

#### **CITY HALL PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS**

Ms. Budetti suggested that the City Hall parking lot immediately adjacent to the East Wing, which had temporary bollards installed to prohibit left turns in the lot, be redesigned and that landscaping be provided in that area.



Ms. Friel reported that she would determine if there was a specific reason for the temporary bollards, that no funding was available to landscape the area, and that new directional signage would be installed in the parking lot soon.

9. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL: The Minutes of 20 March 2006 were approved as presented.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Puentes moved, and Mr. Burnett seconded, to adjourn. The motion passed by voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 9:12 PM. Immediately following the meeting, the Planning Commission met in a worksession to discuss Ordinance T06-05, Pipestem Lots.

Respectfully Submitted,

Noted and Approved:

Debra L. Gee  
Recording Secretary

Elizabeth R. Friel, AICP  
Planning Director

Attachment

The City of Falls Church is committed to the letter and to the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This document will be made available in alternate format upon request. Call 703.248.5040 (TTY 711).